

National Transportation Safety Board
Washington, DC 20594

Brief of Accident

Adopted 12/19/1995

LAX95FA077					
File No. 975	01/12/1995	PLEASANTON, CA	Aircraft Reg No. N754FE	Time (Local): 17:47 PST	
Make/Model:	CESSNA / 208B		Fatal	Serious	Minor/None
Engine Make/Model:	P&W / PT6A-114A		Crew 1	0	0
Aircraft Damage:	Destroyed		Pass 0	0	0
Number of Engines:	1				
Operating Certificate(s):	On-demand Air Taxi				
Name of Carrier:	WEST AIR, INC.				
Type of Flight Operation:	Non-scheduled; Domestic; Cargo				
Reg. Flight Conducted Under:	Part 135: Air Taxi & Commuter				
Last Depart. Point:	VISALIA , CA		Condition of Light:	Night/Dark	
Destination:	OAKLAND , CA		Weather Info Src:	Weather Observation Facility	
Airport Proximity:	Off Airport/Airstrip		Basic Weather:		
			Lowest Ceiling:	5000 Ft. AGL, Overcast	
			Visibility:	7.00 SM	
			Wind Dir/Speed:	Calm	
			Temperature (°C):	Unk/Nr	
			Obstr to Vision:	None	
			Precipitation:	Rain	
Pilot-in-Command	Age: 63		Flight Time (Hours)		
Certificate(s)/Rating(s)			Total All Aircraft:	25500	
Airline Transport; Commercial; Multi-engine Land; Single-engine Land			Last 90 Days:	151	
Instrument Ratings			Total Make/Model:	516	
Airplane			Total Instrument Time:	3200	

A CESSNA 208B STRUCK A RIDGE LINE ABOUT 14 MILES FROM THE DESTINATION AIRPORT. THE PILOT REPORTED TO ATC HE HAD THE AIRPORT IN SIGHT FROM 7,000 FEET MSL MORE THAN 30 MILES AWAY. A WEATHER REPORTING STATION LOCATED 5 MILES EAST OF THE ACCIDENT SITE WAS REPORTING TWO CLOUD LAYERS; A SCATTERED LAYER AT 1,500 FEET AGL, AND A BROKEN LAYER AT 5,000 FEET AGL. THE AIRPLANE WAS DESCENDING AFTER THE PILOT WAS CLEARED FOR A VISUAL APPROACH. THE AIRPLANE COLLIDED WITH A TREE AND THE GROUND IN A WINGS LEVEL ATTITUDE AT AN ELEVATION OF 1,500 FEET MSL. THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF MECHANICAL FAILURE OR MALFUNCTION FOUND WITH THE AIRPLANE.

Brief of Accident (Continued)

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PLEASANTON, CA

Aircraft Reg No. N754FE

Time (Local): 17:47 PST

Occurrence #1: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH OBJECT

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - NORMAL

Findings

1. TERRAIN CONDITION - HIGH TERRAIN
2. (F) DESCENT - INITIATED - PILOT IN COMMAND
3. (F) WEATHER CONDITION - CLOUDS
4. (C) ALTITUDE - NOT MAINTAINED - PILOT IN COMMAND
5. (F) LIGHT CONDITION - DARK NIGHT
6. FLIGHT INTO ADVERSE WEATHER - PERFORMED - PILOT IN COMMAND
7. (C) VFR PROCEDURES - NOT FOLLOWED - PILOT IN COMMAND

Occurrence #2: IN FLIGHT COLLISION WITH TERRAIN/WATER

Phase of Operation: DESCENT - UNCONTROLLED

Findings Legend: (C) = Cause, (F) = Factor

The National Transportation Safety Board determines the probable cause(s) of this accident as follows.

failure of the pilot-in-command to maintain visual contact with terrain and sufficient altitude for terrain clearance. Factors in the accident were the pilot's decision to initiate a descent 14 miles from the airport, and weather, specifically cloud conditions and darkness.